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POSSIBLE COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES IN PROPOSING A CEASE FIRE IN KOREA

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The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff participated in the preparation of this estimate. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 5 July.

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POSSIBLE COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES IN PROPOSING A CEASE FIRE IN KOREA

THE PROBLEM

To examine possible Communist objectives in proposing a cease fire and armistice in Korea.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe that, while the Kremlin has probably not definitely committed itself to any specific course of action, it is likely that the primary Soviet objective in proposing a cease fire is to effect a military disengagement in Korea. Although the Communists may exploit the discussions for a cease fire and the period of the armistice solely to improve their military position prior to the resumption of hostilities in Korea, we believe it more likely that the Communists aim to achieve an indefinitely prolonged armistice. Such an armistice would, in effect, lead to a de facto division of Korea at the 38th Parallel and might, at the same time, serve to improve the Communists' prospects of attaining their objectives in Korea and in larger Far Eastern issues by utilizing a propaganda and diplomatic campaign where military action has been unsuccessful so far.

2. We believe that the Kremlin is fully aware that a military disengagement in Korea would permit utilization of Chinese Communist resources elsewhere in Asia, and would free Communist resources generally for utilization elsewhere in the world. The Kremlin may also estimate that, after a disengagement in Korea, the proximity of Chinese Communist forces in Manchuria would require the retention of substantial US-UN forces in Korea and limit US-UN capabilities for employing armed forces against aggression elsewhere.

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3. We believe that the Kremlin considers that a greatly increased risk of general war would result if it took the military measures necessary to overcome the UN forces in Korea. Furthermore, the Kremlin probably believes that the cessation of hostilities in Korea would put the Communists in a better position to forestall the impending US-sponsored Japanese peace treaty and to pursue other important Far Eastern objectives. Finally, the Kremlin probably believes that the cessation of hostilities in Korea, even temporarily, would facilitate the achievement of the larger Communists objectives: (a) promoting complacency in the West, thus slowing NATO rearmament and (b) blunting the impetus for German and Japanese rearmament.

4. The possibilities cannot be ignored, however, that the Communists: (a) if they fail to achieve their objectives in the Far East through political discussions, will resume the Korean operation on a larger scale, accepting the greatly increased risk of an expanded conflict and even of general war; or (b) will use the cease fire and armistice as a cover for launching other local military operations or even a global war.

5. Whatever may be the Soviet motive in suggesting a cease fire, the Communists will undoubtedly use any suspension or interruption of military action in Korea to increase their offensive capability and to play upon the probable reluctance of the US/UN to resume hostilities, to enhance their bargaining position at all stages of negotiations.

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DISCUSSION

THE COMMUNIST CEASE FIRE PROPOSAL

6. On 23 June, Soviet UN Chief Delegate Malik, speaking on a UN program series, presented a vague suggestion that the "belligerents" should start discussions for a "cease fire and armistice" in Korea. On 27 June Malik's statement was clarified to some extent by Soviet Acting Foreign Minister Gromyko, who stated to US Ambassador Kirk that the representative of parties fighting in Korea ("representatives of the Unified Command plus South Korean Command and of the North Korean's People's Republic Command plus representatives of the Chinese Volunteer Units") should meet and conclude a military armistice, to include a cease fire. Such an armistice, Gromyko said, would be limited to strictly military issues and would not involve political or territorial matters. Gromyko also said that assurances against resumption of hostilities should be discussed between the military representatives formulating the terms of the military armistice.

7. Peiping's initial reaction to the Malik speech was contained in an editorial in the semi-official People's Daily which endorsed Malik's proposal but failed to clarify Peiping's attitute toward the cease fire. This was followed on June 27 by a North Korean broadcast in which the Communist propaganda line calling on the People's Army to drive the enemy into the sea was changed to driving "the enemy within the 38th Parallel." On July 2, the North Koreans and Chinese Communist "volunteers" accepted General Ridgeway's offer to negotiate, changing the site of negotiations to Kaesong in the vicinity of the 38th Parallel and setting the dates for negotiations from 10 to 15 July. As might have been anticipated, Communist propaganda in this period has sought to show that the cease fire discussions are a result of the "defeat" of the UN forces and are being undertaken at the latter's "initiative."

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CURRENT SITUATION IN NORTH KOREA AND MANCHURIA

8. Communist forces in Korea have suffered more than a million casualties in the face of a substantial increase in the effectiveness of UN forces. At present, the military situation in Korea appears to be stalemated generally north of the 38th Parallel after two unsuccessful Communist offensives. The Communists can replace their heavy casualties and can continue large scale military operations in Korea if they receive assistance from the Soviet Union in replacing equipment losses. Unless, however, the Communists commit substantial numbers of heavily equipped troops with strong air support, we believe that they will continue to be unsuccessful in their efforts to defeat UN forces.

9. There are fairly reliable indications that some tanks and heavy equipment are being supplied and that some training in their use is going on in Manchuria. There is also a possibility that the USSR has agreed to train and equip a substantial number of Chinese Communist divisions. It is even possible that the Communists may soon have available sufficient troops in Manchuria trained and equipped with heavy weapons to offset the presently great advantage of UN forces in fire power. Furthermore, Communist air strength in the Korean-Manchuria area has been steadily increased, especially by the provision of some 400 jet fighters supplied by the USSR. With a total of approximately 1,000 aircraft now available and with continuing development of their Air Force, the Chinese Communists possess an ever-increasing capability to challenge UN air superiority in Korea. Unless, however, the Communists were in fact able to offset UN air superiority, logistic difficulties would continue to hamper the movement of the material and manpower necessary to permit Communist forces to sustain large scale offensives in Korea.

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10. There is some evidence of limited Soviet participation in the Korean war, beyond the known provision of aircraft, radar, mines, antiaircraft equipment and technical personnel. Soviet pilots may have flown jet aircraft in combat and fairly reliable reports state that Soviet crews are manning anti-aircraft equipment in North Korea. There are also unconfirmed reports of Soviet combat troops in many locations throughout Manchuria, including towns near the Korean border. There are, however, no firm indications of a Soviet intention to increase their participation in the near future.

11. Recent POW reports indicate some friction between Chinese and North Koreans and a bad food situation in North Korea. However, the reports also indicate that Communist morale in Korea remains generally good.

POSSIBLE COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES

12. Present evidence permits no firm basis for determining the Kremlin's objective in proposing a cease fire in Korea or for predicting the course of action the Communists are likely to pursue. It is probable that the Kremlin's plans remain flexible, permitting the Communists to avoid commitment to any particular course of action until they have had an opportunity to study reaction of the West as the situation develops.

13. In spite of the cease fire proposal, the Communists clearly are striving to improve their military position. They may intend: (1) to use the time gained by the cease fire proposal solely to improve their military position prior to a new offensive; (2) to use the time gained by the armistice and post-armistice negotiations: (a) to improve their military position and then launch an offensive; (b) to permit

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an essential disengagement of their forces and so to free them for deployment elsewhere; or (c) as a cover for the possible launching of a global conflict; (3) to use the armistice and post-armistice negotiations as a first step toward the liquidation of the Communist military venture in Korea. If the Communists pursue either of the first two objectives, their tactics will vary depending upon the length of time they may require to improve their military position. If they pursue the third alternative, they may attempt to liquidate the Korean conflict by reestablishing the division of Korea at the 38th Parallel or they may proceed from the armistice to a political settlement of the Korean conflict and even of broader Far Eastern issues.

PROPOSAL FOR A CEASE FIRE AND ARMISTICE SOLELY TO IMPROVE THEIR MILITARY POSITION

14. The Kremlin may have made its cease fire proposal with no intention of carrying through the negotiations to the conclusion of a cease fire and armistice.

a. Arguments for this course of action:

(i) The Communists may have estimated that the cease fire discussions would result in a relaxation of UN military pressures which would permit them to improve their military position in Korea.

(ii) The Kremlin may have estimated that the mere announcement of a cease fire proposal would have an adverse effect on the morale of UN troops in the field and in training.

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(iii) The Kremlin may have reasoned that the mere announcement of a Soviet "desire" to bring about a cease fire would be a potent propaganda weapon in the Soviet "peace" campaign.

(iv) The Kremlin may also have estimated that the mere suggestion of a cease fire would bring to the fore divergent views on the conditions for a Korean settlement, with divisive effects within and among the UN countries (a great divergence of views is already evident between Republic of Korea and its UN allies).

(v) The cease fire proposal could serve as a cover for a Communist surprise attack in Korea or elsewhere.

(vi) The Kremlin may intend to engineer a breakdown of armistice discussions in order to "justify" increased Soviet support to the Chinese Communists and North Koreans and possibly the commitment of Soviet forces in combat.

b. Arguments against this course of action:

(i) Although the Kremlin will undoubtedly press vigorously the propaganda advantages of its proposal and will be quick to exploit any division which might appear among the UN allies, these advantages would be merely temporary if the Communists in fact broke off the discussions at an early date.

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(ii) Similarly, if the Communists took the initiative in breaking off the discussions, they would gain little in their efforts to exploit the Soviet cease fire proposal to "justify" a subsequent increase in Soviet support of the Chinese Communists and North Koreans.

CONCLUSION OF A CEASE FIRE AND ARMISTICE IN ORDER TO SECURE A LONGER PERIOD IN WHICH TO IMPROVE THEIR MILITARY POSITION

15. The Soviet cease fire proposal may have been intended to result in a cease fire and armistice and possibly in political discussions, which would afford the Communists a longer time to improve the military position as a prelude to the resumption of hostilities.

a. Arguments for this course of action:

(i) A cease fire and armistice would provide a respite which would give the Communists time and opportunity to improve their logistic and tactical situation.

(ii) A cease fire and armistice would break the momentum of the UN military effort in Korea.

(iii) If a cease fire and armistice were concluded, the propaganda and political advantages cited in paragraph 14a above would greatly increase.

b. Arguments against this course of action:

(i) If effective inspection arrangements were included in a cease fire and armistice agreement, the Communists would have

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difficulty in building up, without detection, sufficient military strength in North Korea to change the military balance of power materially.

(ii) The Kremlin would have to recognize that if serious Communist violations of the cease fire and armistice agreements were detected, the UN might resume hostilities.

(iii) The abrupt resumption of hostilities by the Communists after an armistice would increase the risks of extending the conflict.

CONCLUSION OF A CEASE FIRE AND AN ARMISTICE IN ORDER TO CLOSE OUT THE KOREAN CONFLICT

16. The Communists could follow either of two possible courses of action in pursuing this objective. The first would be to conclude an armistice and to prolong it indefinitely. The second would be to use the armistice as a first step toward achieving a final settlement of the Korean conflict or even of broader Far Eastern issues.

17. The Communists might hope by means of the first course of action not only to halt the Korean conflict, but also, in effect, to reestablish the division of Korea on the 38th Parallel, thus achieving a de facto settlement.

a. Arguments for such a course of action:

(i) In the light of the heavy cost of the Korean war thus far, the Communists might well feel that de facto control over the area

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north of the 38th Parallel represented the most favorable terms on which the Korean war could be brought to a close.

(ii) It would enable the Chinese Communists to avoid formal renunciation of any of their original demands (withdrawal of UN forces, control over Formosa, and a seat in the UN) and the consequent loss of face.

(iii) It might subject UN troops in the field to a debilitating and demoralizing period of inaction and create official and popular pressures on the part of the UN belligerents to withdraw their forces from Korea in the face of a requirement to keep these forces in Korea for an indefinite period.

(iv) It might slow down the rate of mobilization and rearmament of the free world.

(v) It would give the Communists time to increase the combat effectiveness of forces in training, including such elite forces as may be training with modern Soviet weapons in Manchuria.

(vi) It would provide the Chinese Communists with an extended respite which they could use to further consolidate their control within China.

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(vii) It would give the Peiping regime time to strengthen its east coast defenses against possible Nationalist assaults, and/or permit Peiping to build up strength in South China for possible action against Southeast Asia or Hong Kong and in East China for a possible invasion of Taiwan.

(viii) It might relieve the USSR of the requirement of sending substantial material aid to Korea and also provide the USSR with greater freedom of action to exert pressure on vulnerable areas elsewhere.

b. Arguments against this course of action:

(i) It would prevent the Communists from achieving their announced objectives in Korea. It might also aggravate existing frictions between the Chinese and North Koreans and bring to the fore problems of control over North Korea and possibly Manchuria which might eventually strain Sino-Soviet relations.

(ii) An indefinite postponement of maximum Communist objectives in Korea would involve severe loss of Communist prestige.

(iii) It might encourage future Western resistance to Communist aggression.

18. The second possible course of action in pursuit of the objective of closing out the Korean conflict would aim at the achievement of a final settlement of the Korean conflict and possibly of larger Far Eastern issues.

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a. Arguments for this course of action:

(i) A final settlement of the Korean conflict would permit the Communists to close out what they may consider a costly and unrewarding incident.

(ii) It would permit the Chinese Communists to proceed with the consolidation of their control in China and to strengthen and redeploy their forces for possible military operations such as Southeast Asia or Taiwan.

(iii) It would result in the eventual withdrawal of UN forces from Korea and would remove what the Communists have declared a threat to the security of Manchuria and the Soviet Union.

(iv) It would permit the Communists to pursue by political and subversive means in Korea what they failed to achieve by military methods.

(v) The USSR might estimate that final settlement of the Korean war would slow the rate of Western rearmament and mobilization by removing the sense of urgency which the hostilities in Korea have created.

b. Arguments against this course of action:

(i) The UN terms for a final settlement in Korea will probably include provisions for eventual unification of Korea under a popularly elected government. The Communists would probably regard such a solution as contrary to their interests in this area.

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(ii) It is probable that in a reunited Korea, the non-Communist elements would be at least initially able to outweigh the influence of the reduced and greatly disorganized Korean Communist elements (barring strong support from the Chinese Communists or the USSR which would presumably be precluded by the terms of the final settlement).

(iii) A final settlement in Korea on UN terms would be a tremendous propaganda victory for the West. This would entail a loss in the prestige of both Communist China and the USSR throughout the world and particularly in the Far East.

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